



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Museum, and noticing the recently instituted Botanical Garden in which plants of various orders are grown in accordance with a scheme arranged by the Rev. W. Tuckwell, and the superintendence of which has, for the benefit of the students, kindly been undertaken by Miss Armitt, a lady living in the neighbourhood who is proficient in such lore; and besides being entertained by the students themselves, among other ways, by a little theatrical performance in French, in which their at-homeness with the language was well displayed, I systematically heard lessons given by the 17 students of the second year, and also by the several mistresses. The lessons given by the students, as ought to be the case, and in accordance with the custom in vogue also in the Government Training Colleges, had been chosen and drawn out by themselves. Of the three lessons thus drawn out by each student one was given before me. In perusing the notes I was much pleased to notice that, whatever the subject was, true comprehension of principles, and the meaning and *rationale* of processes were throughout given a prominent place. I was also glad to see that the children taught were in the habit of quite freely asking questions about any part of the lesson they had not grasped. It should also be mentioned that there is no stint in the provision of illustrative apparatus, and that always of the best that is known.

Among the mistresses, Miss Sumner gave some information on photographs, &c., and then specially directed the attention of the class to the subject of the art of Velasquez. The subject belongs to a branch of knowledge of which Miss Sumner has evidently made herself entirely in command, and she was able to direct the students' attention to many points, suggested by the pictures, in such a way as to give them real insight into the art of the painter. I afterwards saw the class busily engaged, under her able direction, in painting the life figure of one of themselves in the picturesque peasant costume which she had worn in the little French play.

Miss Stirling comes in from Ambleside to give lessons on Physiology, in which she is well versed. Her subject was the Human Ear, and the lesson she gave was remarkable for the way in which it advanced, in treating so complicated a matter, step by step, without pause and without hesitation or faltering, and yet with security that each point was well grasped before the next was taken up.

Mdlle. Mottu gave an admirably sustained lesson on a passage of French poetry to an advanced class on the Gouin system, and I also saw her engaged in giving a composition lesson on a historical subject, the students showing facility in writing French grammatically and idiomatically as well as in speaking.

Fraülein Diez also gave an excellent lesson on some verses of Heine, which the class took up well.

Miss Barnett gave a well illustrated and instructive lesson on Protective Adaptation of Green Leaves against Insects, one which was well calculated to stimulate the observation of the students in their rambles. Miss Barnett also superintends, with eminent success, the teaching of the various handicrafts.

Miss Firth, the daughter of the lady who so kindly interests herself in giving "Art Talks" to the students, was engaged in one of the rooms I visited in giving a Cookery lesson, combining, as I think, therein the artistic with thoroughly scientific method.

Once more, in concluding this somewhat lengthy report, I cannot but express my most hearty admiration of the animation and enjoyment with which the students enter into their daily occupation, and my appreciation of the determination displayed in the conduct and management of the House to bring to the fore all that is known as the *best*, whether in method or apparatus. I have already spoken of the charm of the happy spirit that pervades the House.

C. H. PAREZ,

Vicar of Mentmore;

Dec. 10th, 1902

Late One of H.M. Chief Inspectors of Schools.

REPORT. EXAMINATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SOCIETY.
Christmas, 1902.

Passed: H. Wix, D. Thomson, W. Tibbits, W. White, E. Brookes, B. Goode, M. Wooler, C. Heath, A. Roffe, M. Willis, D. Brownell, E. Carter, R. Hollins, M. Wilson.

Failed: M. Mart, A. Cox.

P.N.E.U. Translation Society.—Subject for February: From one of Racine's Plays.

P.N.E.U. Literary Society.—Subject for February: From Shakespeare's Sonnets.

C. AGNES ROOPER, *Hon. Sec.,*

Pen Selwood, Gervis Road, Bournemouth,

From whom all particulars may be obtained.

BOOKS.

Stories from Froissart, by Henry Newbolt (Gardner, Darton, 6/-). No one is better qualified than Mr. Henry Newbolt to present us with tales from Froissart, for he too is moved by "high patriotism for this realm of England." His introduction is singularly interesting. "From the beginning," he says, "we shall be struck with the evident persistence of national types of character": and, in truth, notwithstanding the trappings of chivalry, it is because Froissart is modern, in spite of the colour and splendour of his pages, that we read him with ever fresh delight. Chivalry was to him "but a plain rule of life," and plain things suit us in the twentieth century as in the fourteenth. Mr. Newbolt's recognition of the curse and the blessing of war, his sense that games to-day are as the jousts of the

fourteenth century, his comforting assurance that the best things are not past, are very good to read, for we know that he notes the signs of the times. It is too late in the day for any commendation of the old knight's delightful gossip, but certainly a knowledge of the *Chronicles* is necessary to a sympathetic understanding of the humours of the fourteenth century. The illustrations by Gordon Browne are spirited and suggestive.

Leading Strings (Gardner, Darton, 2/-), in spite of its forbidding title, is full of bright reading and pictures which children will enjoy.

Cassell's Family Magazine, 1902 (8/-), is, as usual, full of really interesting matter and good illustrations; those belonging to the story of *The Diamond Necklace* which wrought undeserved havoc on the fortunes of Marie Antoinette are especially good. Messrs. Cassell know how to cater for the people.

THE "P.R." LETTER BAG.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of Correspondents.]

DEAR EDITOR,—Your correspondent, Mrs. Littleboy, asked in your December issue for other parents' experiences of stammering in children, and at what age children with this defect should be placed under special training. As in her own case, I have a boy of ten, who has inherited a tendency to stammering which has come down through at least three generations, but I am glad to say that, thanks to his doctor father's careful training, the tendency has almost entirely disappeared. It was noticeable first at about three years of age, and as he grew older and became more aware of it, we observed his desire to avoid going errands where he would have to give a message and he disliked saying grace at meals before strangers. From the very first, his father insisted on his repeating clearly and slowly every sentence in which there was any hesitation, and he was taught to inhale deeply, and thoroughly inflate the lungs before speaking. It often seemed cruel to oblige the child to give the message when he knew that he would stammer, or to check him in his eagerness to tell us something that interested him, and make him tell it slowly, but the seeming cruelty was only the veil of a wise kindness for which the boy can never be grateful enough when he grows older.

Our boy attends a large grammar school, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the mistress of the preparatory form, who never hurried him and always gave him time to speak slowly. His present form master says that he never stammers in school now, and he reads aloud unusually well.

All tendencies to stammer go hand in hand with a highly nervous organization, and if parents understood the unceasing care that must be exercised in each individual case, and the special home training that must begin before the tendency becomes a confirmed habit, we should have fewer of these sad cases that need a specialist's advice, sometimes too late to effect a cure.

42, Foregate Street, Worcester.

J. M. READ.

DEAR EDITOR,—A recent number of the *Spectator* contains the following passages:—"Would it be possible to establish some kind of a Standard Child's Library? would it, that is, be a possible and a useful undertaking to collect together some dozen or twenty books which the verdict of time has pronounced to be good rather than merely exciting—a child's book can be, but not often is, both—and which a child would be the happier for reading? . . . There is a large ethical question—or perhaps, we should say, a broad educational problem—underlying the simple question of the selection of a book to give a child . . . children do not demand any particular kind of book; they take what they are given. They were delighted with Kate Greenaway twenty years ago; they could be taught to be delighted to-day. The responsibility . . . lies with the giver of the book, who is not a child . . . A child's book—a book belonging to the Child's Library—ought to have a certain nobility about it. The princes ought to be brave and the princesses beautiful; the men and women and children ought to do gracious things . . ." I venture to bring these passages to the notice of the readers of the *Parents' Review* in the hope that you may be able to open your columns to a discussion on this subject. Parents may be willing to communicate their experience as to what their children read; they may find time to express an opinion as to what books they consider most helpful to a child, and why. With this help it would be possible to select a certain number of books for a Standard Child's Library; and such a selection would bear more weight than any individual choice; for tastes and ideas differ;—but only to a certain extent. It cannot be doubted that there are certain books which all would acknowledge as standard books for children, if they knew them. Would it not be useful to discuss this question with a view to helping those who purchase children's books? For is not the choosing the most important thing in giving? It is difficult to estimate the influence of books on the young mind, but there can be no doubt that in many cases the heart, character and general disposition of the sentiments are materially affected for good or evil by the books of childhood. Of course it is those who have the guiding of young minds who are responsible. They should know what books are useful, what books harmful. Is it not possible to discuss this question in such a way that this time next year many children will, thanks to the *Parents' Review*, receive books beautiful enough in thought and illustration to teach their eager minds to see and love all that is good and noble in this world rather than what is trivial and worthless?

Yours, etc.,
G. L. F.